

Health Equity Task Force

September 3, 2020 Meeting

Welcome

This is the 2nd meeting of the legislative task force established by Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the “Health Equity Task Force”) to study and make recommendations to the General Court that address health disparities for underserved or underrepresented populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Introduction of Task Force Members

Senate Appointees

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz

Senator Julian Cyr

Task Force Co-Chair, Michael Curry, Esq., Deputy CEO and General Counsel at Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers

Dr. Milagros Abreu, Executive Director, President and Founder of The Latino Health Insurance Program

Dr. Cassandra Pierre, infectious diseases physician and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Boston University

Dr. Frank Robinson, Vice President, Public Health and Community Relations, Baystate Health

Hirak Shah, Legal Counsel for Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr

House Appointees

Representative Chynah Tyler

Representative José F. Tosado

Task Force Co-Chair, Dr. Assaad Sayah, CEO, Cambridge Health Alliance; Commissioner of Public Health, City of Cambridge; Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Kiame Mahaniah, CEO, Lynn Community Health Center

Dr. Myechia Minter-Jordan, President & CEO, DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement and Catalyst Institute

Jeffrey Sanchez, Lecturer, Center for Public Health Leadership, TH Chan School of Public Health; Senior Advisor, Risky Partners

Beverly Stables, Health Care Policy Analyst for House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

Chair of the MA Black and Latino Legislative Caucus

Representative Carlos González

Chair of the MA Asian-American Legislative Caucus

Representative Donald H. Wong

2. Review & Approval of August 24th Meeting Minutes

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions of Task Force members 5 minutes
2. Review & Approval of August 24th Meeting Minutes 5 minutes
3. Recap of Task Force Charge & Requirements under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 10 minutes
4. Review and Approval of Planned Task Force Timeline for Interim and Final Reports 15 minutes
5. Presentation by Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) 30 minutes
(15 minute presentation plus 15 minutes Q&A)
6. Other Presentations, Listening Sessions, and Background Information of Interest to Task Force Members 15 minutes
7. Open Discussion & Logistics 10 minutes

3. Task Force Charge & Requirements Under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 (Report Can Go Beyond These Areas)

Charge of Health Equity Task Force: to make recommendations to the general court that address health disparities for underserved or underrepresented populations based on culture, race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location, including, but not limited to, gateway cities with hospitals dedicated to caring for patients who test positive for COVID-19, and age in the commonwealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to, ways to:

7 Specified Areas for Policy Recommendations Follow on the Next 3 Slides

3. Task Force Charge & Requirements Under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 (Report Can Go Beyond These Areas)

1. Improve Safety for Populations at Increased Risk for COVID-19

What policy actions are needed to improve safety for populations at increased risk for COVID-19, including but not limited to:

- (i) employees of businesses and organizations defined as providing “COVID-19 Essential Services” under the Governor’s March 23, 2020 emergency order;
- (ii) individuals residing in congregate housing and group home facilities, including, but not limited to, those operating under contracts with the department of developmental services, the department of mental health, the department of children and families, executive office of elder affairs, the department of housing and community development, the department of youth services, or the department of public health;
- (iii) inmates confined to a house of correction or state prison;
- (iv) individuals with serious underlying medical conditions linked to increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
- (v) individuals residing in municipalities or neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by COVID-19?

3. Task Force Charge & Requirements Under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 (Report Can Go Beyond These Areas)

2. Remove Barriers and Increase Access to Quality and Equitable Health Care Services and Treatment

What policy actions are needed to remove barriers and increase access to quality and equitable health care services and treatment?

3. Increase Access to Medical Supplies

What policy actions are needed to increase access to medical supplies?

3. Task Force Charge & Requirements Under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020 (Report Can Go Beyond These Areas)

4. Increase Access to Testing for COVID-19

What policy actions are needed to increase access to testing for COVID-19, including identifying ways to ensure that testing occurs in diverse geographic locations throughout the Commonwealth?

5. Information for Populations

What are recommendations to provide informational materials to underserved and underrepresented populations in multiple languages on available and affordable health care resources in the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, prevention, testing, treatment, and recovery?

6. Other Relevant Factors to Address Health Disparities

What are recommendations to address any other factor the Task Force deems relevant to address health disparities for underserved or underrepresented populations based on culture, race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location and age in the Commonwealth during COVID-19 pandemic?

7. Areas of Further Study

As part of its recommendations, the Task Force may recommend the further study of the impact of disparities on populations not subject to this study.

4. Preliminary Planned Task Force Timeline for Interim & Final Reports for Input (subject to updates)

Due to the charge of the Task Force to issue an interim report by October 1 to inform the FY21 state budget process, we propose the following work plan:

September 3 (11:30 AM - 1 PM): Today's Virtual Task Force meeting

September 16 (1 – 4 PM): Virtual Public Hearing (Required before Interim Report)

September 18 (12 – 1:30 PM): Virtual Task Force meeting

Additional September date TBD: Virtual Task Force meeting

Bi-weekly recurring virtual Task Force meetings in October – December 2020 (with at least 2 additional Public Hearings) to complete the Final Report

December 2020 Final Report

5. Presentation by Massachusetts Public Health Association

- Presentation
- Discussion/Q&A

6. Seeking Stakeholder Input and Background Information to Inform Task Force Work

- We seek the input of Task Force Members on stakeholder input and background information essential to our work.
- We appreciate suggestions received to-date. Please share your ideas with us.
- We will organize them into next steps.
- Opportunities for input include: 1) public hearings; 2) written information; 3) at certain task force meetings; and 4) via Task Force Members.
- We encourage inclusive and widespread distribution of our upcoming September 16 Public Hearing notice, which is posted on our webpage on the state legislature's site:

<https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/3563>

6. Suggestions for Background Information for Additional Input

Background Information

- Prior Health Disparities Task Force Recommendations (underway)
- DPH Office of Health Equity information, including MAVEN
- DPH Health Equity Advisory Group Recommendations
- Recent Health Affairs article: *Community-Level Factors Associated With Racial And Ethnic Disparities In COVID-19 Rates In Massachusetts* (distributed)
- Additional Suggestions

7. Open Discussion and Logistics

- Discussion
- Recap
- Health Equity Task Force webpage:

<https://malegislature.gov/Commissions/Detail/512>